

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 13-142—HB 6482

Public Health Committee

Planning and Development Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING BIRTH CERTIFICATES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

SUMMARY: This act allows certified homeless youth and emancipated minors to access or receive their birth certificates. It sets conditions for how youth are certified as homeless for this purpose.

Existing law does not allow minors to access or receive their birth certificates (but their parents, guardians, and certain other family members can obtain birth certificates for them).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2013

CERTIFIED HOMELESS YOUTH

Under the act, a certified homeless youth is a 15- to 17-year old person, not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, who is a homeless child or youth as defined in specified federal law (see BACKGROUND), and certified as homeless by one of the following:

1. a school district homeless liaison;
2. the director of an emergency shelter program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or the director's designee; or
3. the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or the director's designee.

Under the act, when a certified homeless youth requests his or her birth certificate, he or she must appear in person and be accompanied by the person certifying him or her as homeless. The youth must present a written request to:

1. the registrar's office of the town where the youth was born;
2. the registrar's office of the town where the youth's mother resided at the time of birth;
3. if the birth certificate was filed electronically, any registrar of vital statistics in the state with access to the electronic vital records system, as authorized by the Department of Public Health (DPH); or
4. DPH's Vital Records Office.

The act requires the certified homeless youth to present to DPH or the registrar sufficient identifying information as DPH regulations may require. The person certifying the youth as homeless must also present sufficient identifying information to indicate that he or she meets the certification requirements.

BACKGROUND

Federal Definition of Homeless Youth

In the federal public health and welfare statute, “homeless children and youths” are defined, for purposes of certain education programs, as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and meet certain criteria, including:

1. children and youths who are (a) sharing other people’s housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; (b) living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; (c) living in emergency or transitional shelters; (d) abandoned in hospitals; or (e) awaiting foster care placement;
2. children and youths with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation;
3. children and youths living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
4. migratory children (such as children of certain migratory agriculture workers or fishers who are living in the circumstances described above) (42 USC § 11434a).

OLR Tracking: JO:KM:VR:RO